

ABSTRACT

[1077] A network operator identifier is used to uniquely identify each network operator to support international roaming. The network operator identifier includes (1) a Mobile Country Code (MCC) that identifies the country in which a network operator belongs and (2) a Network Operator Code (NOC), which may be a Mobile Network Code (MNC), that distinguishes network operators within a given MCC. Each network operator is assigned a unique combination of MCC and NOC that distinctly identifies the network operator, and the network operator identifier can be stored in a single entry in a preferred roaming list. The base stations of each network operator broadcast the network operator identifier in signaling messages. A mobile station receives a signaling message from a base station, obtains the network operator identifier, searches its preferred roaming list for an entry with the network operator identifier, and determines whether or not the current CDMA network is accessible.